

## Building Bridges:

# Engineers Repair Damaged Bridge for Iraqis

By Pfc. Erik LeDrew  
122nd MPAD

BAGHDAD, Iraq- While some Soldiers are bridging the

cultural and communication gap between the local Iraqi people, the Engineers are out building and repairing bridges

for them. Alpha Co., 20th Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, began repairs on a bridge in Baghdad that had

been recently damaged by insurgent forces.

"While conducting an assessment of the bridge, we found out that the ramps had been blown apart by charges on the south side of the bridge," Capt. Marc Distefano, Alpha Co. commander said. "Whoever did it apparently didn't know how to use charges too well, or the whole bridge would have come down. However, they did pretty much destroy two of the ramps."

Distefano said, the damaged bridge is actually two one-lane bridges that support traffic going both south and northbound where it crosses the Diyala River in northeastern Baghdad. Repair of the heavily trafficked bridge was necessary for both the Iraqi working population and Coalition Forces.

"The bridge was put in last year by the Marines, who are really the subject matter experts on this type of bridge," said Distefano, whose mecha-



By Sgt. Dan Purcell, 122nd MPAD

**Spc. John Simmons Jr., A Co., 20 Eng. Bn., 1st Cav. Div., helps an elderly Iraqi woman up the steep ramp on an undamaged part of the bridge.**

**Continued on Page 3**

## Killeen Group Sends Goodies:

# 312th MI Soldiers Receive Packages From Home

By Sgt. Christopher Rockhill  
312th Military Intelligence Battalion

Waiting for packages from loved ones back home can be excruciating, however, thanks to a group from Killeen, Texas, Soldiers don't have to wait as long for goodies from the states.

Staff Sgt. Christopher Phelps of the 312th Military Intelligence Battalion has been giving out Any-Soldier packages since he arrived in Baghdad.

"We get six to 10 boxes a day," Phelps said. "We're getting stuff from all over, even California, Maine and Illinois."

Phelps, 33, has been in the Army for 15 years. He is a ground surveillance system operator who has been deployed to Iraq twice. People began to write "Any Soldier Letters" to Phelps during the Gulf War and he was so inspired by the support he received in those letters from

Americans back home, that when Soldiers were called to duty in Iraq he worked with his wife, Tonnia Phelps, and his Church to begin the Soldier Support Ministry To Iraq (SSMTI).

"SSMTI was started in January of 2003 in response to

**Continued on Page 2**



# Killeen-Based Program Benefits 1CD Soldiers in Iraq

**Continued from Page 1** the deployment of the 4th ID from Fort Hood," said Tonnia Phelps.

The Any-Soldier-Mail program is a national program, but the SSMTI is funded locally in Killeen, through the Memorial

Baptist Church and is for all Soldiers from Fort Hood, especially 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers. The program aims to send specific things that a Soldier needs, wants or that he just can't find in Iraq.

"It's about helping with

things they can't get here or things for the family back home," Phelps said. "It's about doing something for people who are protecting this country."

Although the mail is free for Soldiers, Phelps said that a quick thank-you note will go a long way.

"I recommend that if they get something and they are thankful, that they write a quick note," he said.

The program is not just for junior enlisted Soldiers.

"It could be the general himself," he said. "It doesn't matter the rank, it just matters that someone has a need, even civilian contractors. We are all over here doing the same thing."

One of the Soldiers to receive a package was Pfc. Matt Scroggs of 312th MI Bn.

"I haven't got any mail, [from home]," Scroggs said. "I like the package and I really want to write them to let them know I appreciate them sending stuff."

He wasn't the only pleased Soldier. Everyone is in better spirits after receiving a package, said 1st Sgt. Anthony Torres, Headquarters Co.,

312th MI Bn.

"It's good for the Soldiers, it's good for morale," Torres said. "It makes deployments easier when you know people in the states support you."

Tonnia Phelps said the mail will continue to come until we return home, but said the program will probably continue after the division leaves Iraq.

"This [program] can grow very large or stay small," said Tonnia Phelps. "It's up to the [Soldiers] to write and request needs."

Staff Sgt. Phelps said, all Soldiers need to

do is to send a request by e-mail to the SSMTI. He is also looking for interested Soldiers to be distributors of the packages. Soldiers can also have their family and friends go to any one of the many "Any Soldier Mail" Web sites and spread the word.

"4th ID (Infantry Division) had truck-loads worth of packages," he said with satisfaction. "I am not the one that makes it happen, it is the people back home that send it to us."

For more information on the SSMTI contact [www.soldierministrytoiraq@yahoo.com](http://www.soldierministrytoiraq@yahoo.com)

**"It's good for the Soldiers, it's good for morale."**

**-1SG Anthony Torres, HQ Co., 312th MI Bn.**



By Sgt. Christina Rockhill, 1st Cavalry Division PAO

**Pfc. Benjamin McGowen (right) admires an "Any Soldier" package that his fellow Soldier Pfc. Cheyenne Cannaday received from the Soldier Ministry to Iraq organization. Cannaday was one of many Soldiers from 312th Military Intelligence who have received the packages from back home.**

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OneStar Foundation

## Killean Youth Recognized for Volunteerism

► From *Killean Daily Herald*  
KILLEEN, Texas- Some of the Killean area's youngest residents were honored Monday night for answering their community's and their country's call to service.

The Greater Killean Area's Promise presented more than 225 local students, elementary through high school age, with the President's Volunteer Service Award at a ceremony at the Killean Civic and Conference Center.

The awards, given on gold, silver and bronze levels, recognize commitment to volunteer service of 50 to more than 250 hours.

President George W. Bush called on Americans in 2002 to make a commitment to volunteering, and the President's Volunteer Service Award recognizes those who have answered the call. The Greater Killean Area's Promise also especially values youth volunteerism and has honored young people who give back to the community for the last four years.

Every year, the number of youngsters earning the president's award has grown in the Killean area. This year, the bar

was raised, and students had to accomplish more volunteer hours than before to achieve their award status.

Bonitia Milledge, a senior at Harker Heights High School and chairperson of the Youth Advisory Commission, was celebrating her 140 hours of community service at the ceremony. She said she got involved in volunteering in the 10th grade, looking to put something cool on a college application.

Bonitia and many other volunteering youth helped with the American Cancer Society Relay for Life, the youth conference in the fall and even the recent 4th Infantry Division welcome-home celebration. Bonitia said she enjoys volunteering for the sense of pride she feels and will continue her volunteering habits, maybe even turning them into a stint in the Peace Corps.

Col. Dan Shanahan, 4th ID rear detachment commander, spoke to the crowd of children and families, mentioning the priceless experiences that go with volunteering and that go far beyond monetary payment.

"You're setting yourself up for success by being here today and by volunteering," he said.

**"You're setting yourself up for success by being here today and by volunteering."**

**-COL Dan Shanahan,  
4ID Rear Det.  
Cmdr.**

## Building Iraqi Bridges, Relations

Continued from Page 1

nized engineer unit is trained mainly for breaching and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD). "However, because there was only damage to the ramps and no structural damage we felt we could make the repair."

According to Distefano, there were three phases involved in repairing the bridge.

Phase one included making a damage assessment; phase two included taking parts from one damaged bridge in order to fix the other less-damaged one, and phase three will entail coordinating with a contractor to help make the second bridge functional.

"Most of what we had to deal with today was corrosion and dirt where the bolts to the ramp were," said 1st Lt. William Abel, 20th Eng. Bn. "But we have a great welder who helped us take care of the rusted bolts."

According to Abel, who performed the damage assessment of the bridge, it was difficult to try and explain to the local Iraqis why the bridge had been closed.

"A lot of people wanted to know what we were doing out there and I tried to explain to them that we were fixing the bridge," he said, "Things like this are a great way of building positive relations with the Iraqi people."

"Anything we do that'll help the Iraqis is a step in the right direction," Distefano said.

According to Distefano,

his unit was given a 48-hour time-frame to complete repairs on at least one of the two bridges.

"We went out and did a recon and an assessment of the damages, and then we looked into our own organization to see what internal assets we had that might help us repair this bridge," he said. "Then we made our plans and were able to execute them the next

**"Anything we do that'll help the Iraqis is a step in the right direction."**

**- CPT Marc Distefano,  
Cmdr., A Co.,  
20th Eng. Bn.**

morning."

Distefano said he hopes that his unit will have the opportunity to work on other projects like this, despite the time constraint.

"A lot of engineers don't get many construction projects like this because the emphasis has been on mobility and breaching," he said. "So anytime we can do construction, it's well-received."



By Sgt. Dan Purcell, 122nd MPAD  
**Sgt. Eric Cardenas, a track mechanic with the 115th Forward Support Battalion, was tasked to assist the 20 Eng. Bn. with the bridge repairs.**

### Wednesday

High: 90  
Low: 66



### Thursday

High: 94  
Low: 63



### Friday

High: 97  
Low: 68





## Today in History

### May 5

► From [historychannel.com](http://historychannel.com)

1821 Napoleon dies in exile  
1862 Cinco de Mayo - Mexican army defeats French army at the Battle of Puebla  
1864 Grant and Lee clash in the Wilderness Forest  
1877 Sitting Bull leads his people into Canada  
1936 Bette Davis wins the Academy Award for Best Actress (in *Dangerous*)  
1945 Six killed in Oregon by Japanese bomb (The first and only known Americans to be killed in the continental United States during WWII)  
1961 The first American in space (Navy Commander Alan Shepard launched into space on board *Freedom 7* space capsule)  
1986 The Love Boat airs its last episode

## UMHB Women's Golf Team Selected for Tourney

► From *Killeen Daily Herald*  
BELTON, Texas- The Mary Hardin-Baylor women's golf team will cap the spring season with a fourth straight trip to the NCAA Division III National Championships following the announcement of this year's tournament field today.

The Lady Crusaders will enter the tournament as the No. 4 seed behind top-ranked DePauw University, five-time defending champion Methodist College and Wisconsin-Oshkosh. The UMHB women have now qualified for a national tournament berth in all eight years of the program's existence.

The Lady Crusaders made four straight trips to the NAIA National Tournament and won the NAIA National Championship in 2000.

The 2004 NCAA D-III Women's Golf National Championship will be played at The Golf Clubs of Lawsonia in Green Lake, Wis. Only 10 teams and 10 individual players earn bids to the national tournament.

Conference rival Hardin-Simmons was also selected to the tournament, along with McMurry individual Brittany Cary, giving the ASC 11 of the 60 golfers in this year's tournament.

"We're very excited to once again be chosen to be part of the National Championship," Lady Crusader head coach Darla Kirby said. "It is an honor to be selected and we look forward to the chance to play against the best teams in the country."



University of Mary Hardin Baylor

**The Women's Golf Team from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton, Texas, will compete in the NCAA Division III National Championships for the fourth year in a row.**



## Today in Cavalry History

1969 - MG Forsythe turned command of the 1st Cavalry Division to MG. E.B. Roberts.  
1971 - The 1st Cavalry Division returns to the United States and assigned to Fort Hood, Texas.  
1971 - The 1st Cavalry Division received an experimental designation as a TRICAP (Triple Capability) Division and was reorganized with an Armored, Infantry and Air Cavalry Brigade.

## Scores



### MLB

#### AMERICAN LEAGUE

Cleveland 7  
Boston 6  
  
Baltimore 10  
Chicago 3  
  
Toronto 5  
Kansas City 4  
  
Tampa Bay 5  
Texas 4

#### NATIONAL LEAGUE

Montreal 10  
Colorado 4  
  
St. Louis 6  
Philadelphia 5  
  
Los Angeles 4 (11 innings)  
Florida 3  
  
Milwaukee 6  
Cincinnati 2  
  
New York 6  
San Francisco 2  
  
Atlanta 4  
San Diego 2  
  
Arizona 6  
Chicago 3



### NBA

#### Playoffs

Miami 85  
New Orleans 77  
(Miami wins series 4-3)

## TV GUIDE

	<b>AFN</b> ATLANTIC	<b>AFN</b> PACIFIC	<b>AFN</b> Sports	<b>AFN</b> Spectrum
<b>18:00</b>	Popular Mechanics for Kids/ Liberty's Kids	The Tonight Show with Jay Leno/ The Late Show with David Letterman	NBA Fastbreak/ Totally NASCAR	Aldrich Ames: The Traitor Within 17:00
<b>19:00</b>	Jeopardy/ Headline News	Access Hollywood 19:30	SportsCenter	The Wild Thornberrys/ The Fairly Oddparents
<b>20:00</b>	ESPNNews/ Headline News	Planes, Trains & Automobiles	ESPNNews/ Baseball Tonight 20:20	The Simpsons/ The Cosby Show
<b>21:00</b>	8 Simple Rules.../ The Bernie Mac Show	Madame Sousatzka 21:45	SportsCenter	American Idol
<b>22:00</b>	America's Next Top Model		MLB- Los Angeles Dodgers @ Florida Marlins	Star Trek: Next Generation